DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 329 631 UD 027 933

TITLE	Success for All. CREMS Report.
INSTITUTION	Center for Research on Elementary and Middle Schools, Baltimore, MD.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	Feb 89
NOTE	9p.
AVAILABLE FROM	CREMS Report, John H. Hollifield, Editor, Center for Research on Elementary and Middle Schools, The Johns Hopkins University 3505 North Charles Street, Baltimore, MD 21218.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Compensatory Education; *Economically Disadvantaged; Grade Repetition; *High Risk Students; Primary Education; *Program Effectiveness; *Reading Achievement; *School Restructuring; Urban Schools
IDENTIFIERS	Baltimore City Public Schools MD; *Maryland (Baltimore); Success for All Program MD

ABSTRACT

"Success for All" is a compensatory education program that significantly increased the reading performance of disadvantaged primary grade students in a Baltimore (Maryland) elementary school while also reducing retentions and special education placements. The program concentrates resources in kindergarten through grade three and uses research-based instructional programs to insure that all students will be performing at grade level by the end of the third grade. A first-year evaluation compared participants with a control group at a similar school. The following key findings are reported: (1) participants outscored controls on a variety of measures of reading readiness and reading comprehension; (2) only one participant was retained at the end of the year; and (3) only two participants were referred to special education for learning problems. The following program elements are described: (1) preschool and kindergarten; (2) family support teams; (3) regrouping for reading instruction; (4) reading tutors; (5) individual academic plans; (6) program facilitators; (7) teacher training; and (8) advisory committees. The program appears to indicate that school restructuring can succeed in producing a school where all students will be on grade level. Plans for program expansion and future evaluation issues are discussed. A 10-item bibliography is appended. (FMW)

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Success for All

Evaluations of the Success for All program after a full year in a Baltimore City elementary school find that the program is living up to its name -- children in pre-k through grade 3 are succeeding at an academic pace that could soon have all of them performing at grade level or beyond on the reading and language skills that provide the base for for further success.

The Success for All program, a collaborative effort of the Baltimore City Public Schools, the local Abell Foundation, and the Center for Research on Elementary and Middle Schools, blends commitment, money, and research-based school programs.

The program restructures the elementary school with one commitment in mind: Do everything necessary to insure that all students will be performing at grade level in reading, writing, and mathematics at the end of third grade. This goal is accomplished through concentrating resources in grades pre-K to 3 and using instructional programs based on the best available research.

The money comes from a variety of sources. Chapter 1 provides the school with federal funds to improve education for disadvantaged children; an infusion of Chapter 2 funds supplements the effort; the Abell Foundation provides funding for implementing and evaluating the Success for All program; the Office of Educational Research and Improvment (OERI) funds CREMS staff working with the school to carry out the project.

The research-based school programs are numerous: One-on-one tutoring, regrouping for reading, a family-support team, frequent assessments of learning with immediate help on problems, use of an effective reading program, and more.

INSIDE ...

This issue of the CREMS *Report* is devoted exclusively to the description and evaluation of Success for All.

FEBRUARY 1989

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Success For All: First-Year Results

The first-year evaluations have been reported by CREMS researchers Nancy Madden, Robert Slavin, Nancy Karweit, Barbara Livermon, and Lawrence Dolan. The evaluations compare the performance of Success for All children in pre-K through grade 3 with the performance of children in a nearby school matched on the percent of students receiving free lunch and on historical achievement level.

The program's first year concentrated on reading and language, and the children's progress was measured separately in preschool, kindergarten, and first, second, and third grades.

A quick summary indicates the scope of the results: From pre-K through third grade, Success for All children outscored control school children on multiple measures of reading readiness through reading comprehension. In addition, in grades 1-3, the Success for All school retained only one child in grade at the end of the year, and referred only two children to special education for learning problems.

Preschool and Kindergarten Results

Measures of preschool achievement were the TOLD (Test of Language Development) picture vocabulary, sentence imitation, and grammatic completion scales, and the Merrill Language Screening Test. Kindergarten measures included these plus the Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery Letter-Word Test and the Woodcock Word Attack Test.

Preschool Success for All children scored significantly higher than control on the picture vocabulary and sentence imitation scales, and on the Merrill Language Screening Test's Comprehension scale. Effect sizes ranged from .44 to .66. No significant differences were found for grammatic completion.

Kindergarten Success for All children outscored control on the sentence imitation and grammatic completion scales, on the Merrill Language Screening Test, and on the Woodcock Letter-Word Test and Word Attack scales. Effect sizes ranged from .47 to .71, except for Word Attack, which had an effect size of 3.74. The only scale that did not show a significant difference was picture vocabulary.

Results -- First, Second, and Third Grade

Measures applied at the end of first-grade included the Woodcock Picture Vocabulary, letter-word identification, and word attack, and the Durrell Oral Reading and Durrell Silent Reading (Comprehension) tests. Second- and third-grade measures included all of these except the Woodcock Picture Vocabulary.

Also, California Achievement Test (CAT) Reading Comprehension and Reading Vocabulary scores were used as measures at the end of first, second, and third grade.

Analyses at each grade level were conducted for all students and also separately for the lowest scoring 25 percent of students on the pretest.

First Grade

Success for All first-graders scored significantly higher on all five scales of the Woodcock and Durrell inventories. They scored at an average grade equivalent of 2.0 (50th percentile), compared to the control group's average grade equivalent score of 1.5 (28th percentile). The effect size averaged +.67.

Among students who were in the lowest 25 percent on the pretest, Success for All students scored at an average grade equivalent of 1.7 (38th percentile), compared to the control group's average grade equivalent score of 1.2 (8th percentile). The effect size averaged 1.10 -- these Success for All children scored more a full standard deviation better on these tests than did control children.

The Success for All first-graders showed no significant gains compared to control on the California Achievement Test (CAT) reading vocabulary and reading comprehension assessments administered by the district.

Second Grade

Success for All second graders scored significantly higher than control on the Woodcock Letter-Word and Word Attack scales. Overall, they scored at an average grade equivalent of 2.6 (46th percentile) compared to the control group's 2.3 (36th percentile). The effect size averaged +.28.

The Success for All second graders in the lowest 25 percent on pretests scored at an average grade equivalent of 2.0 (14th percentile); compared to comparison students average grade equivalent of 1.8 (8th percentile). The effect size averaged +.32.

On the CAT, Success for All second-graders scored significantly higher than control ($p<.05$) on reading comprehension but no significant differences were found for reading vocabulary.

Third Grade

The Success for All third-graders showed the strongest effects of all grade levels. They scored significantly higher than control on all four individually administered measures, averaging 3.6 grade equivalents (47th percentile) compared to the control group average of 2.4 (17th percentile). The effect size averaged +.95.

The lowest 25 percent of Success for All third-graders scored a grade equivalent average of 2.7 (19th percentile), compared to the control group's 1.8 (2nd percentile), an effect size of +.99.

And on the CAT, the results for reading comprehension and reading vocabulary significantly favored the third-graders in the Success for All program.

Other Effects

Some of the potentially most important effects of Success for All do not show up in standardized test scores. These are effects on student retention and referrals to special education.

The year before Success for All, the school retained about 12 percent of first- through third-graders. After a year of Success for All, only one child was retained in grade.

In the previous year, thirty children were referred to special education, and eighteen were accepted. In the Success for All year, two students diagnosed as retarded were the only students referred to special education for a learning problem.

In a classic example of Catch-22, this success caused the school to lose its special education resource teacher.

More Than One Way To Skin a CAT

Although the Success for All program helped improve grade 1-3 scores on the California Achievement Test, the standardized achievement test given statewide to all public school children, these gains are not as large as those found on the more precise individually administered reading measures.

Thus the first year of Success for All did not "skin" the CAT, as the saying goes -- but did ruffle its fur, especially on the reading comprehension scale.

How do you reconcile some very large gains on two sets of standardized tests (Woodcock and Durrell) with not-so-large -- although still significant -- gains on another standardized test (the CAT)?

The primary explanation is that the Success for All curriculum does not specifically emphasize the concepts and words that the CAT measures, which many other curricula do (including the Baltimore City reading curriculum, used in the control group).

This emphasis shows up especially in results with younger children (grades one and two) on vocabulary scales -- not surprisingly, teaching the vocabulary that will be on the CAT helps children learn the vocabulary that will be on the CAT.

Seen in this light, the fact that Success for All nonetheless still produces higher overall CAT scores than a control school becomes a much stronger finding.

Success for All: The Research-Based Program Elements

Success for All is a philosophy backed up by research-based instructional programs. The philosophy is one that is often stated but less often acted upon -- all children can learn.

From this philosophy comes a schoolwide commitment that *all* children *will* learn -- not some, not many, not most, but all. And Success for All then puts this commitment into operational terms: By the end of third grade, all children will be performing on grade level in the basic skills of reading, language, and mathematics. By the end of third grade, all children will have the foundation of basic skills necessary for success in later grades and in later life.

Let's say it again -- not some children, not many, not most. All. That's the commitment.

Meeting this commitment requires a school program with many elements. It must stress prevention of learning problems by engaging parents in support of school success and by using the best available classroom instruction. It must stress intensive and immediate interventions to correct learning problems when they first appear and are small enough to do something about.

The elements of the Success for All program address these principles. They include provision of preschool and kindergarten, a family support team, an effective reading program, reading tutors, individual academic plans based on frequent assessments, a program facilitator, training and support for teachers, and a school advisory committee.

Preschool and Kindergarten

The Success for All school provides a half-day preschool and a full-day kindergarten, both focused on providing a balanced and developmentally appropriate learning experience for young children.

The curriculum emphasizes the development and use of language, balancing academic readiness and music, art, and movement activities. Readiness activities include use of Peabody Language Development Kits and the Story Telling and Retelling (STaR) program in which students retell stories read to them by teachers. Prereading activities begin in the second semester of kindergarten.

Research on preschool has found that preschool *per se* has multiple early effects on children's achievement and later effects on staying in school, being less delinquent, being employed, and other variables.

Research on kindergarten has found that full-day is basically more effective for the achievement of disadvantaged children than is half-day. Also, research on kindergarten programs has identified the Peabody Language Development Kits as effective for improving student achievement, and the concepts underlying the STaR program are well established.

Family Support Team

Two social workers and one parent liaison work full-time in the school. This team provides parenting education and works to involve parents in supporting their children's success in school. They provide family support assistance for children who are not receiving adequate sleep or nutrition, who need glasses, who are not attending school regularly, or who have serious behavior problems.

Many studies have found that children achieve better when parents support of their academic efforts. The work of the Family Support Team is directed toward encouraging and structuring that support.

Reading Program

Students in grades 1-3 are regrouped for 90-minute reading periods each day into classes of 15 students who are all at the same reading level. Thus each reading class might contain a mix of first-, second-, and third-graders, but each child would be at the same reading level.

This regrouping is a form of the Joplin Plan, which has been shown to increase reading achievement in the elementary grades.

The reading program itself is based on the best available research. It focuses on making every child literate, beginning with the development of language and comprehension skills in preschool and kindergarten.

Beginning in the middle of their kindergarten year and continuing until they reach reading level 2-1, the children learn auditory discrimination, sound recognition, and sound blending, using phonetic minibooks rather than basals. They often work together in pairs, reading to one another and working on "share sheets." They read high-interest trade books in school and at home.

At reading level 2-1, children begin a form of the Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) program. They work in small teams in which they read to one another; identify characters, settings, problems, and problem solutions in narratives; summarize stories, and write.

Reading Tutors

The Success for All program includes six tutors for the 300 students in grades K-3. Each tutor works one-on-one with a total of eleven students per day.

First-graders get priority for the tutoring, however, on the assumption that the primary function of the tutors is to help all students be succcessful in reading when they first begin -- success which would negate the need for tutors in subsequent grades.

The tutors are certified, experienced teachers. They work one-on-one with children who are having trouble keeping up in their regular reading groups. The tutoring is conducted in 20-minute sessions taken out of an hour-long social studies period and addresses the objectives being covered in the regular reading curriculum.

During the 90-minute reading periods, the tutors serve as additional regular reading teachers. They coordinate their tutoring activities with the activities of the regular reading teachers through the use of specific information forms and scheduled meetings.

Two sources of research support one-to-one tutoring. Reviews of research on class size find few effects until you get down to a class size of one. Also, research finds gains in student achievement for specific one-to-one tutoring programs, such as Reading Recovery.

Individual Academic Plans

At least every eight weeks, based on assessment of progress by the reading teachers, Individual Academic Plans are developed for each student to determine mine who is to receive tutoring, to suggest other adaptations in a child's program, and to identify children who may need special assistance, such as family intervention or screening for vision or hearing.

Program Facilitator

A Program Facilitator works at the school full time to coordinate the operation of Success for All. The Facilitator works with the principal to plan and schedule the program, and visits classrooms and tutoring sessions frequently to help with individual problems.

The Facilitator works with individual children when needed to find strategies for helping them, helps teachers and tutors deal with behavior problems, and coordinates the activities of the Family Support Team with those of the instructional staff.

Teacher Training

The teachers and tutors are regular Baltimore City teachers. They received two days of inservice at the beginning of the year and work from detailed teachers' manuals to carry out the Success for All program. Several brief inservices were provided during the year on topics such as classroom management, instructional pace, and implementation of the reading curriculum.

Advisory Committee

An advisory committee meets weekly to review the progress of the program. The committee includes the school principal, the Program Facilitator, teacher representatives, a social worker, and Johns Hopkins research staff.

Success for All: Problems and Potential .

Success for All is in its second year in a Baltimore City inner-city elementary school. The first-year results are exciting, but the bottom line occurs when the preschoolers of the first 1987-88 year become the third-grade class of the 1992-93 year. The goal is that all of them will be at grade level in the basic skills required for success in later grades.

Many problems can and will arise. Teachers and administrators come and go in all school systems. Priorities and funding wax and wane.

And student populations change. Many of this school's current preschoolers will be somewhere else when they hit third grade; many of this school's third-graders four years from now will be students new to the school and new to the Success for All program.

The Success for All program itself is just beginning to incorporate effective math and writing programs, although the existing structures will promote these activities.

All this is by way of making a point: A lot of system, school, and technical difficulties loom ahead for Success for All -- indeed, for any schoolwide program that seeks not only to improve student achievement progressively across the grade levels, but also to prove experimentally that it has done so.

That being said, let's get optimistic. The first-year results have many implications. The first, of course, is that significant progress has been made in structuring urban elementary schools so that all children in those schools will be on grade level in their academic work by the end of third grade.

Imagine all students entering the fourth grade with at least grade-level reading, writing, and mathematical abilities. A major part of the work of fourth grade (as with any other grade) has always been the struggle to remediate all those students who had less than grade-level skills.

Could the intermediate elementary grade levels then become the grade levels where serious attention turns to the critical thinking skills and higher-order learning that so many of today's students notoriously lack? Can they become, for all students, the year of vocabulary extension, of truly creative writing, of expanded reading not only for pleasure but to learn? Having a base of academic skills, can intermediate elementary grade students then become proficient in study skills -- in learning to learn?

The success of Success for All would have other far-reaching implications. Academic achievement in school and self-esteem go hand in hand, so Success for All children would be expected to grow in their confidence in themselves and their abilities.

At the same time, Success for All has effects on the two major elements of student dropout -- poor academic achievement and retention in grade. Grade retention, especially, is a potent predictor of dropout -- students retained once in their academic careers are more likely to drop out than those not retained, and students retained twice are overwhelmingly likely to drop out.

The program also has implications for helping our education system produce the professional scientists demanded of an increasingly technological society, and especially increase the participation of minorities in the scientific fields. The best predictor of entrance into advanced science and math courses is success in lower-level science and math courses, which the acquisition of grade-level skills by the end of third grade should facilitate.

At the end of third grade, no opportunities would already be foreclosed to these children. No patterns of failure would already have been established. All children would enter fourth grade with every option for future success still open.

Success for All: Expanding the Dream

In the 1988-89 school year, based on Success for All's first-year results, the program is being implemented in various forms in seven other Baltimore City elementary schools and in an elementary school in Philadelphia.

Each of these implementations will be as rigorously evaluated as the continuing original implementation.

One of the seven Baltimore City elementary schools -- the most disadvantaged in the city by community income -- is implementing a full version of Success for All with funding from the France and Merrick Foundations in Baltimore.

Four other Baltimore City elementary schools, by reallocating their Chapter 1 funds, are putting in less expensive versions, as is the Philadelphia school, which serves a large number of Cambodian and Laotian children. Thus the Philadelphia school will test the efficacy of Success for All elements for language minority children.

Finally, two Baltimore City elementary schools are using and evaluating the K-1 reading program only.

Continuing Research Issues

The research on the Success for All program and its underlying principles will be addressing a number of issues in the coming years.

The documentation of the cumulative and lasting impact of the program will be a major issue. Not only is it important to reach the goal of every child on grade level by the end of third grade -- the true effectiveness of the program will be assessed by what happens as these children move into middle and high school.

The research will also examine which program elements contribute most to the overall effects, and how schools may be able to implement slimmed-down versions of the program that are less expensive but still effective. The Success for All research also offers opportunities to learn more about effective elements of school organization, curriculum, family support, the structure of tutoring, and other topics.

Success for All: References and Materials

This CREMS *Report* is based primarily on the technical evaluation report of Success for All (CREMS Report #30, listed below). This listing also includes Center and other documents instrumental in providing the research base for the program, and other published articles about the program.

Available from the Center

Madden, Nancy A., Robert E. Slavin, Nancy L. Karweit, Barbara J. Livermon, and Lawrence Dolan. Success for All: Effects on Student Achievement, Retentions, and Special Education Referrals. Center for Research on Elementary and Middle Schools, The Johns Hopkins Univerity, Report No. 30, February 1989, 35 pp. ($3.25).

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The CREMS *Report* is distributed at no charge. Its purpose is to provide interested educators with summaries of research results. Full reports of CREMS studies, cited in the References section of each article, may be ordered from the Center at the cost indicated.

CREMS is funded primarily by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), United States Department of Education. The opinions expressed do not reflect the policy of OERI or other funding agencies, and no official endorsement should be inferred.

Comments about the *Report* and requests to be placed on the mailing list should be directed to John H. Hollifield, Editor, CREMS *Report*, Center for Research on Elementary and Middle Schools, The Johns Hopkins University, 3505 North Charles Street, Baltimore MD 21218.

Upcoming Issues

Success for All. We will continue to follow the progress of the Success for All program. The evaluation results for the second year of implementation of the program should become available around the fall of 1989. We'll also take a close look at Story Telling and Retelling (STaR), the preschool and kindergarten component of Success for All.

Parent Involvement in Middle Schools. Parents don't get heavily involved even in elementary schools, but that involvement drops off even more at the middle school level. What school, family, and student attitudes contribute to this non-involvement? What can the middle school do to involve parents in ways that will help address the problems of our "caught-in-the-middle" children?

Computer Use in Math. Results from the National Field Study of the Use of Computers in Math will also soon be available. This study involves 31 schools in 25 districts in 16 states, all conducting experimental studies of the actual achievement effects in mathematics of computer use in the classroom compared to traditional teacher instruction.

Middle School Studies. A multitude of programs -- team teaching, mentor-mentee programs, and so on -- are advocated for helping middle schools promote the academic work of students while meeting developmental needs. National survey data will help identify what programs are being used and what their effects actually are. Field studies will answer questions about how these programs can be structured to produce the benefits they seek.

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The Johns Hopkins University
3505 N. Charles Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21218

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